



Sunset United Church

December 19, 2021 - Advent 4

Seeking Sanctuary/Love



*Sunset United, located on Treaty 4 Territory,
is an Affirming community of faith. All are welcome here.*

WE GATHER

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Words

Hymn VU#1 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel¹ (vs. 6 & 7)

O come, O Dayspring, from on high,
and cheer us by your drawing nigh,
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Desire of nations, bind
all peoples in one heart and mind,
O bid our sad divisions cease,
and be for us the Prince of Peace.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Call to Worship²

We are seeking -

Deeper faith,

A place to belong

The feeling that God is here in this room.

We are seeking -

Joy that overflows,

The movement of the Spirit,

A hand to hold,

When alone in the gloom.

We are seeking -

The freedom to be,

The courage to love,

The conviction to act in the face of injustice.

We are seeking, but here in this space and time,

We are found.

Take a deep breath. This is your sanctuary.

God is here. We are found. Amen.

Advent Candle Liturgy

Sung Refrain VU#7 Hope is a Star³

Hope is a star that shines in the night,
leading us on till the morning is bright.

Refrain

When God is a child there's joy in our song.
The last shall be first and the weak shall be strong,
and none shall be afraid.

Peace is a ribbon that circles the earth,
giving a promise of safety and worth.

Refrain

Joy is a song that welcomes the dawn,
telling the world that the Saviour is born.

Refrain

Love is a flame that burns in our heart,
Jesus has come and will never depart.

Refrain

Prayer Seeking Reconciliation

Mary's world turned upside down...
...Let us pray together now:
God of safe spaces,
We wish we were more like Mary,
Who in the face of great change,
Went and sought help.
She did not wait for help to find her;
She walked to the shelter she needed.
Too often we wait silently for the world
To change around us
Instead of speaking up for the things we need.
Forgive us for failing to care for ourselves
The way you would care for us.
Give us the courage to be more like Mary.

God of safe places,
We wish we were more like Elizabeth,
Who greeted Mary with laughter
And contagious joy.
How many people have crossed our doorstep
And how many times have we failed to see them?
Give us the courage of Mary

And the grace of Elizabeth.
Gratefully we pray, Amen.

Words of Assurance

Family of faith...

...There is nothing we can do to lose God's love.

Rest in this promise:

If we get lost,

We will be found.

If we mess up,

We are forgiven.

If we withhold love,

God is lavish in loving us.

We are claimed. We are loved. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Sung Response MV#90 Don't Be Afraid⁴

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.**

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger and
I have promised, promised to be always near.**

Sharing the Story

Hymn VU#8 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming⁵

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming, as seers of old have sung.
It came a blossom bright, amid the cold of winter,
when half spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the Rose I have in mind,
with Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.**

To show God's love aright she bore for us a Saviour
when half spent was the night.

WE LISTEN

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture Micah 5:2-5a
 Luke 1:39-55

Special Music

Reflection

Hymn MV#120 My Soul Cries Out⁶

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
 Let the fires of your justice burn.
 Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
 and the world is about to turn!

Though I am small, my God, my all,
you work great things in me,
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
to the end of the age to be.

Your very name puts the proud to shame,
and to those who would for you yearn,
you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
for the world is about to turn.

Refrain

From the halls of power to the fortress tower,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
For the world is about to turn.

Refrain

Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which hold us bound,
'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.

Refrain

Call to Offering

Offering Prayer

Good and Gracious God,
We give these gifts for the seekers.
We give these gifts for those who need sanctuary.

We give these gifts for those who build sanctuaries.
We give these gifts for those who have lost sanctuary,
and for those who find sanctuary all over the place.

Use these gifts to bring us closer to home.

With joy and hope in our hearts, we pray, amen.

Prayers of the Community and The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us
our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn VU#64 O Little Town of Bethlehem⁷

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary; and gathered all above,
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love

O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all on earth.

How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessed gift of heaven.

No ear may hear his coming; but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Sending Forth and Blessing

Postlude



Minister: Rev. Tricia Gerhard (she/her)

Children & Youth Minister: Michelle McConkey (she/her)

Choir Director: Corinne Groff (she/her)

Pianist: Shirley Hill (she/her)



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⁷ Words: Phillips Brooks 1868. Music: Lewis Henry Redner 1868. Reprinted under One License 605683.

